

REMARKS

The Examiner has stated that claims 9-16 and 29-36 are duplicative of claims 1-8 and 21-28. The Applicant respectfully traverses this contention. Independent claims 9 and 29 both recite grasper "means". This means language is missing from independent claims 1 and 21. As stated in MPEP § 2111.01, claim terms are to be given their ordinary meaning. This section of the MPEP also states that there is an exception to this rule, the exception being where the claim language invokes paragraph 6 of 35 U.S.C. § 112. Paragraph 6 is commonly known as the means section. Independent claims 9 and 29 both use the term means and recite function for that means. The Applicant is clearly invoking paragraph 6 coverage for these claims. Means claims are to be interpreted to cover corresponding structure in the Specification and equivalence thereof. MPEP § 2181. The Applicant contends that claims 9-16 and 29-36 are of different scope than claims 1-8 and 21-28. Consequently, these claims are not duplicative.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-40 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Paulos in view of Pin. The Examiner has conceded that neither Paulos nor Pin disclose a grasper as recited in the claims. The Examiner has taken official notice that is well known in the art of robotics to use graspers. The Applicant does not dispute that graspers have been used in the robotic arts. The Applicant does dispute the contention that it would be obvious to employ a grasper with a mobile robot that has a camera. None of the references disclose or suggest this combination of limitations. In combination of a mobile platform, camera and grasper create a unique function not found in robots of the prior art. The function being the ability to move objects with a mobile robot while allowing a user to view the object being moved. By way of example, the Applicant has discussed movement of a wheelchair through a remote input by a user. Paulos does not disclose or suggest to incorporate a grasper that adds this additional function to the robot. Section 4.5 of Paulos clearly states that the arm is a simple pointing mechanism.

The Examiner states that a recitation of the manner in which an apparatus is used does not differentiate the apparatus from a prior art apparatus satisfying the claim's structure limitations. The Applicant respectfully disagrees with this contention, particularly as it relates to the methods recited in claims 37 – 40 of the application. In general, methods claims cover steps not structure. Consequently, the prior art must disclose the steps recited in the method claims.


Neither Paulos nor Pin disclose the methods recited in claims 37 – 40 of the above entitled application. For all of the above reasons, the Applicant submits that claims 1 – 40 are not unpatentable over Paulos in view of Pin.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejection is requested. Allowance of claims 1 - 40 at an early date is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Susan Langworthy Date